<u>IN THE CLAIMS</u>

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the Application:

<u>LISTING OF CLAIMS</u>:

1.   (Currently amended) A content distribution system, comprising:

a domain name service server which is configured to provide domain name service responses in response to domain name service requests; and

a data communications device which is capable of interconnecting between a client and the domain name service server, wherein the data communications device includes:

an interface which is capable of communicating with the client, and

a controller coupled to the interface, wherein the controller is configured to:

intercept a first domain name service request from the client<u>, the first domain name service request including a domain name field having first contents being solely a host domain name that that can be resolved into a corresponding network address,</u>

<u>determine whether the host domain name in the domain name field of the first domain name service request is included in a list of domain names associated with corresponding content servers,</u>

provide a second domain name service request to the domain name service server

through the interface in response to interception of the first domain name service request, the second domain name service request ~~selectively (i) including a client identifier which identifies the client, and (ii) not including the client identifier which identifies the client, based on a selection decision,~~ having a modified domain name field if the host domain is included in the list of domain names, the modified domain name field including a concatenated value including the host domain name as well as a client identifier identifying the client, such that the concatenated value does not represent a domain name that can be resolved to a network address, and

convey a domain name service response from the domain name service server to the client through the interface, the domain name service response including a content server identifier which identifies ~~a~~ one of the content server~~s~~.

2.   (Cancelled)

3.   (Currently amended) A data communications device, comprising:
        an interface which is capable of communicating with a client; and
        a controller coupled to the interface, wherein the controller is
configured to:

intercept a first domain name service request from the client<u>, the first domain name service request including a domain name field having first contents being solely a host domain name that is the subject of the domain name service request message and that can be resolved into a corresponding network address,</u>

<u>determine whether the host domain name in the first domain name field of the domain name service request is included in a list of domain names associated with corresponding content servers,</u>

provide a second domain name service request to a domain name service server through the interface in response to interception of the first domain name service request, the second domain name service request ~~selectively (i) including a client identifier which identifies the client, and (ii) not including the client identifier which identifies the client, based on a selection decision,~~ <u>having a modified domain name field if the host domain is included in the list of domain names, the modified domain name field including a concatenated value including the host domain name as well as a client identifier identifying the client, such that the concatenated value does not represent a domain name that can be resolved to a network address,</u> and

convey a domain name service response from the domain name service server to the client through the interface, the domain name service response including a content server identifier which identifies ~~a~~ <u>one of the</u> content server<u>s</u>.

4.   (Cancelled)

5.   (Currently amended) The data communications device of claim 4 3
wherein the processing circuitry is further configured to:

include a flag in the domain name field of the second domain name
service request when the client identifier is included in the domain name
field of the second domain name service request, and not include the flag
in the domain name field of the second domain name service request
when the client identifier is not included in the domain name field of the
second domain name service request.

6.   (Cancelled)

7.   (Cancelled)

8.   (Currently amended) A data communications device, comprising:

an interface which is capable of communicating with a client; and
a controller coupled to the interface, wherein the controller includes:

means for intercepting a first domain name service
request from the client, the first domain name service
request including a domain name field having first contents
being solely a host domain name that is the subject of the
domain name service request message and that can be
resolved into a corresponding network address,

means for determining whether the host domain name
in the domain name field of the first domain name service
request is included in a list of domain names associated with
corresponding content servers;

means for providing a second domain name service
request to a domain name service server through the

interface in response to interception of the first domain name service request, the second domain name service request ~~selectively (i) including a client identifier which identifies the client, and (ii) not including the client identifier which identifies the client, based on a selection decision~~ having a modified domain name field if the host domain is included in the list of domain names, the modified domain name field including a concatenated value including the host domain name as well as a client identifier identifying the client, such that the concatenated value does not represent a domain name that can be resolved to a network address; and

means for conveying a domain name service response from the domain name service server to the client through the interface, the domain name service response including a content server identifier which identifies ~~a~~ one of the content server__s__.

9.   (Currently amended) A method for obtaining a domain name service on behalf of a client, the method comprising the steps of:

intercepting a first domain name service request from the client, the first domain name service request including a domain name field having first contents being solely a host domain name that is the subject of the domain name service request message and that can be resolved into a corresponding network address,

determining whether the host domain name in the domain name field of the first domain name service request is included in a list of domain names associated with corresponding content servers;

in response to interception of the first domain name service request, providing a second domain name service request to a domain

name service server ~~which, based on a selection decision, selectively (i)~~ ~~includes a client identifier which identifies the client, and (ii) does not~~ ~~include the client identifier which identifies the client;~~, the second domain name service request having a modified domain name field if the host domain is included in the list of domain names, the modified domain name field including a concatenated value including the host domain name as well as a client identifier identifying the client, such that the concatenated value does not represent a domain name that can be resolved to a network address, and

conveying a domain name service response from the domain name service server to the client, the domain name service response including a content server identifier which identifies ~~a~~ one of the content server~~s~~.

10.   (Cancelled)

11.   (Currently amended) The method of claim ~~10~~ 9 wherein the step of providing the second domain name service request further includes the step of:

including a flag in the domain name field of the second domain name service request when the client identifier is included in the domain name field of the second domain name service request, and not including the flag in the domain name field of the second domain name service request when the client identifier is not included in the domain name field of the second domain name service request.

12.   (Cancelled)

13.   (Cancelled)

14.   (Currently amended) A computer program product that includes a computer readable medium having instructions stored thereon for obtaining a domain name service on behalf of a client, such that the instructions, when carried out by a computer, cause the computer to perform the steps of:

intercepting a first domain name service request from the client, the first domain name service request including a domain name field having first contents being solely a host domain name that is the subject of the domain name service request message and that can be resolved into a corresponding network address,

determining whether the host domain name in the domain name field of the first domain name service request is included in a list of domain names associated with corresponding content servers;

in response to interception of the first domain name service request, providing a second domain name service request to a domain name service server which, based on a selection decision, selectively (i) includes a client identifier which identifies the client, and (ii) does not include the client identifier which identifies the client, the second domain name service request having a modified domain name field if the host domain is included in the list of domain names, the modified domain name field including a concatenated value including the host domain name as well as a client identifier identifying the client, such that the concatenated value does not represent a domain name that can be resolved to a network address; and

conveying a domain name service response from the domain name service server to the client, the domain name service response including a content server identifier which identifies a one of the content servers.

15.   (Currently amended) A content distribution system according to claim 1, wherein the domain name service server comprises:

an interface which is capable of communicating with the data communications device; and

a controller coupled to the interface, wherein the controller is configured to:

————receive the second domain name service request from the data communications device through the interface, the domain name service request including a data communications device identifier which identifies the data communications device,

parse a domain name field of the second domain name service request to determine whether the domain name field has a first contents or a second contents, the first contents being solely a host domain name that can be resolved into a corresponding network address, the second contents being solely a concatenated value including the host domain name and a client identifier identifying the client, such that the concatenated value does not represent a domain name that can be resolved into a corresponding network address;

select the content server identifier from a predetermined group of content server identifiers based on (i) the client identifier which identifies the client when the domain name field of the second domain name service request ~~further~~ includes the ~~client identifier~~second contents, and (ii) the data communications device identifier when the domain name field of the second domain name service request ~~does not~~ includes the ~~client identifier~~first contents, and

provide the domain name service response to the data communications device through the interface, the

domain name service response having the selected content

server identifier which identifies a content server.

16.   (Currently amended) A content distribution system according to claim 15, ~~wherein the second domain name service request includes a domain name field, and~~ wherein the controller of the domain name service server includes:

processing circuitry which is configured to determine whether the domain name field of the second domain name service request includes a flag indicating that the domain name field includes the client identifier such that (i) selection of the content server identifier is based on the client identifier when the domain name field of the domain name service request includes the flag, and (ii) selection of the content server identifier is based on the data communications identifier when the domain name field of the domain name service request does not include the flag.

17.   (Currently amended) A content distribution system according to claim 1, wherein the domain name service server comprises:

an interface which is capable of communicating with the data communications device; and

a controller coupled to the interface, wherein the controller includes:

means for receiving the second domain name service request from the data communications device through the interface, the domain name service request including a data communications device identifier which identifies the data communications device,

means for parsing a domain name field of the second domain name service request to determine whether the domain name field has a first contents or a second contents, the first contents being solely a host domain name that can

be resolved into a corresponding network address, the second contents being solely a concatenated value including the host domain name and a client identifier identifying the client, such that the concatenated value does not represent a domain name that can be resolved into a corresponding network address;

means for selecting the content server identifier from a predetermined group of content server identifiers based on (i) the client identifier which identifies the client when the domain name field of the domain name service request further includes the client identifier second contents, and (ii) the data communications device identifier when the domain name field of the domain name service request does not includes the client identifier first contents, and

means for providing the domain name service response to the data communications device through the interface, the domain name service response having the selected content server identifier which identifies a content server.

18.   (Currently amended) A method according to claim 9, further comprising the steps of:

receiving the second domain name service request which includes a data communications device identifier identifying a data communications device;

parsing a domain name field of the second domain name service request to determine whether the domain name field has a first contents or a second contents, the first contents being solely a host domain name that can be resolved into a corresponding network address, the second contents being solely a concatenated value including the host domain

name and a client identifier identifying the client, such that the concatenated value does not represent a domain name that can be resolved into a corresponding network address;

selecting a content server identifier from a predetermined group of content server identifiers based on (i) the client identifier which identifies the client when the domain name field of the second domain name service request further-includes the client-identifiersecond contents, and (ii) the data communications device identifier when the domain name field of the second domain name service request does-not-includes the client identifierfirst contents; and

providing the domain name service response having the selected content server identifier which identifies the content server.

19.   (Currently amended) The method of claim 18 wherein the second domain name service request includes a domain name field, and wherein the step of selecting the content server identifier includes the step of:

determining whether the domain name field of the second domain name service request includes a flag indicating that the domain name field includes the client identifier such that (i) selection of the content server identifier is based on the client identifier when the domain name field of the second domain name service request includes the flag, and (ii) selection of the content server identifier is based on the data communications identifier when the domain name field of the second domain name service request does not include the flag.

20.   (Cancelled)

21.   (New) A data communications device according to claim 3, wherein the concatenated value has the form of CLIENT_ID.DOMAIN_NAME in which

CLIENT_ID represents the client identifier and DOMAIN_NAME represents the host domain name.

22.   (New) A data communications device according to claim 21, wherein the client identifier is in the form of a numerical Internet address.

23.   (New) A content distribution system according to claim 15, wherein the concatenated value has the form of CLIENT_ID.DOMAIN_NAME in which CLIENT_ID represents the client identifier and DOMAIN_NAME represents the host domain name.

24.   (New) A content distribution system according to claim 23, wherein the client identifier is in the form of a numerical Internet address.